

Community Bulletin

Kelly Air Force Base Conversion Agency

August 22, 2001

Vandals Damage Apartments

The Air Force Base Conversion Agency (AFBCA) will board up three vacant former military family housing buildings at 309, 311 and 313 Calgary Street in the Billy Mitchell Village area to prevent entry and further vandalism. On August 14, major interior damage was discovered in most of the 12 apartments in these three buildings. Vandals apparently broke into the apartments and caused tens of thousands of dollars' worth of damage to lighting and plumbing fixtures, appliances, walls, windows and ceilings.

The vandals did extensive damage to the sheet rock walls in these buildings. The paste that was used to hang the sheet rock walls contained asbestos. As a result of the vandalism, asbestos fibers in the paste may have been released inside the apartments. These apartments were built before asbestos-containing materials were regulated.

Over the next two weeks, asbestos specialists will remove the damaged sheet rock in the buildings. Signs that warn of a potential health risk from asbestos inside the buildings will be posted at entries. The level of airborne asbestos fiber inside these apartments does not affect anyone outside the buildings.

These apartments have been vacant and are scheduled for transfer to the City of San Antonio. Due to the extensive damage, transfer of these apartments has been delayed.

Contact information

If you see vandalism occurring in your area please report it immediately to the San Antonio Police Department. For further information on this incident, please call the AFBCA Public Information Line at (210) 925-0956.

What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that was commonly used in construction prior to 1978. Asbestos was added to a variety of products to strengthen them and provide heat insulation and fire resistance. Asbestos can be found in flooring tiles, ceiling tiles, some roofing materials and wallboard. In most products, asbestos is combined with a binding material so that it is not readily released into the air. As long as the material remains bonded so that fibers are not released, it poses no health risk. Even in such well-bonded materials as floor tiles and painted surfaces, asbestos can become loose and airborne when these materials are cut, scraped, filed, sanded or removed. Remodeling or demolition often causes the release of asbestos fibers. Removal is complex and should be done only by a contractor with special training.

Asbestos fibers can have serious effects on your health if inhaled. There is no known safe exposure to asbestos. The greater the exposure, the greater the risk of developing an asbestos-related disease. Inhaling high levels of asbestos fibers over a long period of time can lead to lung diseases such as mesothelioma (a form of lung cancer) and asbestosis (a scarring of the lungs that leads to breathing problems and heart failure). It may be linked to cancer of the stomach, intestines and rectum as well.

It is important to remember that asbestos becomes a potential health risk only when the fibers are released into the air through breakage of the materials containing asbestos. The asbestos inside the apartments does not affect anyone outside.